



June 12, 2015

Mr. Malcolm Dougherty
Director, California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 94273

RE: Maintain SB 391 Focus of CTP 2040—Map the Course Required to Achieve State GHG Reduction Goals, including “Avoid Funding Projects that Add Road Capacity and Increase Maintenance Costs”

Dear Director Dougherty:

On behalf of the undersigned, we want to commend Caltrans for its excellent work in drafting the California Transportation Plan 2040 (CTP). We support the general direction of the CTP, as it appropriately reflects state policy goals relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, public health, reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), increasing accessibility, protecting natural and agricultural resources, and addressing social equity. We recommend that Caltrans maintain its focus on GHG reduction. The proposed draft CTP language to “avoid funding projects that add road capacity and increase maintenance costs” should not be tempered. It is critical that California’s transportation plan for the next quarter century signal clearly that road expansion is no longer the preferred and automatic first response to congestion and population growth.

We look forward to the forthcoming revisions based on the public workshops and comment period and expect to see the CTP include more actionable recommendations better connected to the CTP analysis and goals. We understand that while the CTP provides a vision for California

transportation policy and system operations, it must maintain a certain level of deference to local and regional decision-makers. As described at the CTP Policy Advisory Council meeting on May 26, 2015, Caltrans successfully achieved this balance in the circulated first draft CTP, endorsed by the CTP Policy Advisory Committee.

The recommendation in the draft CTP to “[a]void funding projects that add road capacity and increased maintenance costs” is a perfect example of that balance. The CTP provides guidance consistent with state goals while supporting city, county, regional and state leaders’ authority to shape the build-out of the multimodal system. Decision-makers at city, county, regional, and state levels will retain the freedom and flexibility to develop plans, select the highest performing projects, and enact policy, procedures and funding programs, within state policy parameters that may increase—in specific projects—road capacity. However, the CTP provides clear guidance that roadway expansion projects are not the preferred options in most situations.

The draft CTP language does not set forth a prohibition against additional road capacity. It recognizes the well-researched causal relationship between most new road capacity projects and more vehicle miles traveled, and thus the conflict between meeting our state goals to reduce VMT and the likely effects of adding new road lane capacity. It is our understanding that the draft language encourages options that do not expand capacity to be considered first. If these options do not perform well according to state goals including reduced VMT, then options of adding road capacity can be evaluated. If an expansion project is shown to reduce VMT, improve safety for all travelers, promote increased active transportation and achieve other state goals, it could and should be implemented. If a road expansion is the only effective solution, the policy allows it to be pursued. “Avoid adding road capacity” is a clear expression of taking a balanced approach—one that considers long term VMT impacts, supports investment in healthy transportation, and avoids adding to the growing and under-funded cost of repairing and maintaining California’s current infrastructure.

The CTP 2040 clearly demonstrates that we need to take dramatic action in order to meet our state goals. Caltrans, with the support of the California State Transportation Agency and the Office of Planning and Research, should stay the course in providing clear guidance for all California jurisdictions to meet the state’s established 2020, 2040 and 2050 climate goals and increase sustainable active transportation, while preserving regional and local flexibility.

Thank you,

Jeanie Ward-Waller, Policy Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Wendy Alfsen, Executive Director
California Walks

Matt Baker, Land Use & Conservation Policy
Director
Environmental Council of Sacramento

Jacquolyn Duerr, MPH, President
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cc:

Secretary Brian Kelly, California State Transportation Agency
Ken Alex, Office of Planning and Research
Gabriel Corley, California Department of Transportation
Members of the CTP 2040 Policy Advisory Committee